CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of transmitting an event notification, comprising the steps of:

    a. transmitting to a first individual, via a not-automatically receipt confirmed communication, a first data packet that includes a first event code, the first event code corresponding to a first event;

    b. upon receiving a response communication from the first individual, requesting that the first individual respond with the first event code;

    c. if the first individual responds by transmitting the first event code, then identifying the first event from the first event code; and

    d. transmitting instructions relating to the first event to the first individual.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of identifying the first individual from the first event code.

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of identifying the first individual from a caller identification data packet received from a telephone.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first event comprises an alarm at a selected location.

5. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of maintaining a record of the telephone call received from the first individual.

6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

    a. transmitting to a second individual, via a not-automatically receipt confirmed communication, a second data packet that includes a second event code, the second event code corresponding to the first event;

b.   upon receiving a response communication from the second individual, requesting that the second individual respond with the second event code;

c.   identifying the first event and the second individual from the second event code; and

d.   if the step of transmitting instructions relating to the first event to the first individual has already been completed, then transmitting to the second individual an indication that the second individual is not required to respond to the first event.

7.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the instructions include directions to a location of the first event.

8.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of selecting the first individual from a plurality of individuals based upon a preselected set of criteria.

9.   The method of Claim 8, wherein the preselected set of criteria include at least one of the following:

a.   who of the plurality of individuals is currently on duty;

b.   who of the plurality of individuals is closest to a location of the first event;

c.   who of the plurality of individuals is currently not assigned to another event; and

d.   who of the plurality of individuals is most capable of responding to the first event.

10.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting to a local facility an indication that the first event has occurred.

11.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of displaying information relating to the first event on a site accessible to a user via a global computer network.

12.   The method of Claim 11, wherein the information includes a graphical display of a location of the first event.

13.   The method of Claim 11, wherein the information includes a graphical display of a nature of the first event.

14.   The method of Claim 11, wherein the information includes a graphical display of a current location of the first individual.

15.   The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of verifying that the first individual has responded to the first event by reading a personal identification of the first individual.

16.   The method of Claim 15, wherein the verifying step comprises the step of reading a personal identification apparatus at a location of the first event.

17.   The method of Claim 15, wherein the verifying step comprises the step of reading biometric data at a location of the first event.

18.   The method of Claim 15, further comprising the step of activating a service mode upon completion of the verifying step, wherein the first event occurs at a first location and wherein the service mode causes a preselected set of subsequent events occurring at the first location to be ignored.

19.   The method of Claim 15, further comprising the step of activating a service mode upon completion of the verifying step, wherein the first event occurs at a first location and wherein the service mode causes a preselected set of pending events occurring at the first location to be ignored.

20. The method of Claim 1, wherein the transmitting step comprises the step of instructing the first individual to follow a procedure to indicate acceptance of responsibility for the first event.

21. The method of Claim 20, wherein the procedure comprises depressing a preselected button on a telephone handset.

22. The method of Claim 1, wherein the transmitting step comprises the step of transmitting a description of the first event to the first individual.

23. The method of Claim 1, wherein the transmitting step comprises the step of transmitting at least one instruction to the first individual as to how the first individual is to respond to the first event.

24. The method of Claim 1, wherein a plurality of events occurs at a location and wherein if the first individual responds to the fist event then the first individual accepts responsibility for each of the events of the plurality of events.

25. The method of Claim 1, wherein a plurality of events occurs at a location, further comprising the step of allowing the first individual to selectively accept responsibility for each of the events of the plurality of events.

26. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first event occurs at a first location and wherein at least one secondary event is triggered by the first event, further comprising the step of receiving acceptance for the secondary event when the first individual indicates acceptance for the first event.

27. A method of transmitting an event notification, comprising the steps of:
   a. automatically transmitting, from a central event notification center, a notification of an event to at least one individual;
   b. receiving from the individual, at the central event notification center, an indication of acceptance of responsibility for the event; and

c.   upon completion of the receiving step, updating a central database to indicate that the event has been responded to.

28.   The method of Claim 27, further comprising the step of automatically identifying the individual.

29.   The method of Claim 28, wherein the identifying step comprises the step of receiving a unique personal identifying code that identifies the individual.

30.   The method of Claim 29, wherein the personal identifying code is transmitted to the central event notification center by the individual keying in the personal identifying code via telephone.

31.   The method of Claim 29, wherein the personal identifying code is transmitted to the central event notification center by the individual activating a personal identification apparatus.

32.   The method of Claim 28, wherein the identifying step comprises the step of receiving a unique notification identifying code that identifies a specific instance of execution of the transmitting step.

33.   A method of transmitting an event notification, comprising the steps of:
a.   receiving an event indication from a remote station indicating an event condition; and
b.   upon expiration of a preselected period, notifying at least one individual of the event.

34.   The method of Claim 33, wherein the preselected period comprises an expected amount of time from completion of the receiving step until a restore signal would be transmitted from the remote station, the restore signal indicating that the event condition had ceased to exist.

35. The method of Claim 33, wherein the preselected period comprises an expected amount of time from completion of the receiving step until at least one second event indication would be received if a second event, related to the first event, were to occur.

36. The method of Claim 33, further comprising the step of transmitting a single notification of a group of related events to the individual.

37. The method of Claim 33, wherein the receiving step and the notifying step each occur at a central event notification center.

38. A method of displaying status of notifications, comprising the steps of:
   a. displaying a map on a computer screen;
   b. displaying at least one first icon on the map corresponding to a location of a stationary asset that is subject to the occurrence of events;
   c. altering the icon to signify the occurrence of a first event if the first event occurs at the stationary asset;
   d. receiving an indication of a current location of a mobile asset assigned to respond to the event; and
   e. displaying at least one second icon on the map corresponding to a current location of the mobile asset.

39. The method of Claim 38, wherein the mobile asset comprises a service vehicle.

40. The method of Claim 38, wherein the mobile asset comprises a personal locating device.

41. The method of Claim 38, wherein the altering step comprises the step of changing the color of the icon.

42. The method of Claim 38, wherein the step of displaying at least one second icon further comprises the step of periodically determining an updated current

location of the mobile asset and periodically updating second icon on the map to represent the updated current location of the mobile asset.

43. A method of delivering event notification data to a proprietary network used by a local facility, comprising the steps of:

   a. receiving, at a central notification processing center of a multi-user notification network, event notification data from a local reporting device;

   b. converting the event notification data from a first data format characteristic of the multi-user notification network, into a second data format characteristic of a proprietary network; and

   c. transmitting the event notification data, in the second data format, to a local facility.

44. The method of Claim 43, wherein the receiving step comprises receiving a notification via a wide area data network.

45. The method of Claim 43, wherein the transmitting step comprises transmitting the event notification data to the local facility via a wide area data network.

46. The method of Claim 43, wherein the transmitting step comprises transmitting the event notification data to the local facility via a telephone network.

47. The method of Claim 43, wherein the regional multi-user notification network is a national network.

48. A method of monitoring rainfall, comprising the steps of:

   a. sensing rainfall with a rainfall sensor at a selected location;

   b. periodically transmitting rainfall data indicating an accumulated rainfall amount, determined as a result of the sensing step, to a central processing center using a not-automatically receipt confirmed communication protocol device; and

c.   providing the rainfall data to a selected local facility.

49.   The method of Claim 48, further comprising the step of transmitting an immediate notification if a rainfall rate above a predetermined threshold is sensed by the rainfall sensor.

50.   The method of Claim 49, wherein the predetermined threshold is a rate of one tenth of an inch per hour.

51.   The method of Claim 49, wherein the transmitting step further comprises accepting an acknowledgment from an individual who has received an immediate notification.

52.   The method of Claim 49, wherein a plurality of rainfall sensors are distributed over a predefined geographic region and wherein the accepting step further comprises:
a.   accepting a single acknowledgment from an individual who has received one immediate notification corresponding to a first sensor of the plurality of rainfall sensors; and
b.   upon sensing the single acknowledgment, suppressing immediate notifications corresponding to each of the plurality of rainfall sensors for a preselected period.

53.   The method of Claim 48, wherein the sensing step is performed using a tipping bucket.

54.   The method of Claim 48, wherein the providing step comprises the step of placing the rainfall data on a site accessible via a global computer network.

55.   The method of Claim 54, wherein the providing step further comprises the steps of:
a.   displaying a map on a computer screen;

b. displaying a rainfall sensor icon on the map so as to correspond to the selected location of the rainfall sensor; and

c. upon receiving an indication that a user desires to view data relating to the rainfall sensor, displaying the rainfall data.

56. A device for accepting a response to a notification from an individual at a selected location, comprising:

a. a personal identification apparatus disposed at the selected location, capable of identifying an individual and capable of verifying that the individual is at the selected location; and

b. a wireless communication apparatus, responsive to the personal identification apparatus, that transmits to a central notification processing center, an indication that the individual is at the selected location.

57. The device of Claim 56, further comprising an event notification system that receives an indication of an event from a fixed asset and that is capable of transmitting to the central notification processing center an indication that the event has occurred.

58. The device of Claim 56, wherein the personal identification apparatus comprises a service key reader.

59. The device of Claim 56, wherein the personal identification apparatus comprises a bar code key reader capable of reading a bar-coded tag.

60. The device of Claim 56, wherein the personal identification apparatus comprises a magnetic stripe reader.

61. The device of Claim 56, wherein the personal identification apparatus comprises a biometric data reader.

62. The device of Claim 56, wherein the personal identification apparatus comprises:

   a. a global positioning satellite receiver that is capable of locating the individual;

   b. a wireless communications circuit, responsive to the global positioning satellite receiver, that is capable of transmitting to the central notification processing center a location of the individual at a predetermined time; and

   c. a computer programmed to:

      i. determine if the location of the individual is within a preselected distance from the selected location; and

      ii. indicate to the central notification processing center that the individual has arrived at the selected location if the individual is within the preselected distance from the selected location.

63. The device of Claim 62, wherein the global positioning satellite receiver is programmed to enter an inactive mode once the location of the individual is within the preselected distance from the selected location.

64. The device of Claim 62, wherein the global positioning satellite receiver is disposed in a vehicle driven by the individual.

65. A method of generating a record of service visits, comprising the steps of:

   a. reading personal identification data relative to an individual at a preselected location with a personal identification apparatus disposed at the preselected location;

   b. transmitting the personal identification data, a timestamp data packet and a location identification data packet from the personal identification apparatus to a central processing center via a wireless communication channel;

   c. storing the personal identification data, the timestamp data packet and the location identification data packet a the central processing center;

     d.   generating a report that indicates the when the individual visited the preselected location.